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# THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC

## PART II

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Caecilia Metella was one of the worst women of her time. She had been involved in an intrigue with Aesopus, the son of the tragedian (cf. *Ad Att.* xi. 15. 3); and Cicero believed that it was the evil influence of this man upon her that led her to ruin Dolabella. She was divorced from her husband, P. Lentulus Spinther, in 45 B.C. (cf. *Ad Att.* xii. 52. 2; xiii. 7. 1). She seems to have been one of those glaring examples of the rottenness of the private life of the times. "There were few prominent women of the times," generalizes Drumann, "who did not arouse scandal or who were not guilty of breaking marriage faith. Their evil conduct had more influence upon the youth and upon their children than that of the men, though the men too were to blame for their neglect of their wives and their intercourse with other women. But the state was without any religious foundation; and private life was likewise without any sure foundation, since that also must be permeated with religion to grow and flourish."<sup>1</sup>

So general, indeed, was this laxity of relationship that when a case of literary friendship is met with, as that of Cicero and Caerellia, we find it misunderstood. "She was a wealthy and cultivated lady with whom Cicero was on intimate terms of friendship."<sup>2</sup> She copied the *De Finibus*, having obtained it from Atticus against Cicero's wishes (cf. *Ad Att.* xiii. 21. 5; 22. 3). When introducing her to Servilius Cicero calls her "my intimate friend," *necessaria*. She was very rich, and even had property in Asia (cf. *Ad Fam.* xiii. 72); and Cicero seems to have borrowed money from her, which Atticus thought was inconsistent with his dignity

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, V, 380.

<sup>2</sup> Tyrrell and Purser, IV, LXXI.

(cf. *Ad Att.* xii. 51. 3). That she was what we might call a patroness of Cicero we should judge from the fact that Publilia asked her to bring about a reconciliation between Cicero and herself when their relations began to be strained (cf. *Ad Att.* xv. 1. 4). It is, in fact, rather a relief to meet one such woman in the midst of all the feverish spirits of the time, the sort of "blue-stocking," to be sure, which Juvenal satirized in a later period (cf. *Juv.* 6. 434 f.), but at least calm and reposeful.

In speaking of Clodia's influence in political circles, we mentioned the fact that Cicero had endeavored to find out through her and through her sister-in-law Mucia, the wife of Pompey, that man's attitude toward himself. Mucia was the third of Pompey's five alliances; for as may be expected in the case of men whose political fortunes were in such a constant state of flux as Pompey's were, and in a society where political expediency governed so largely matrimonial connections, the prominent men changed their wives as frequently as political policy demanded; and where marriage seemed inexpedient, the lax social customs of the day allowed them to overlook and treat lightly those looser relationships whereby pleasure or political expediency was served. Though Mucia seems to have been the most influential of Pompey's wives, for completeness we may bring in the others, noting above all how all the alliances, except the first one and the last one, with Cornelia, the widow of Crassus, were made for political reasons. In 86 B.C. before he had achieved any prominence, Pompey had married Antistia, the daughter of P. Antistius, a marriage based apparently on sentiment. But in 82 B.C., to cement his relations with Sulla, Pompey divorced her and married Aemilia, Sulla's daughter,<sup>1</sup> though for the purpose she was forced to a divorce from her husband, Manius Glabrio. She died soon after, upon the birth of her son, Marcus Glabrio; and Pompey married Mucia, daughter of Q. Mucius Scaevola, the step-sister of Q. Metellus Celer, consul in 60 B.C., and Q. Metellus Nepos, consul in 57 B. C.

In Mucia we find an example of those women who, separated from their husbands by the exigencies of war, utilized their freedom from such restraint to passionate ends. As Cicero tells us,

<sup>1</sup> Drumann, IV<sup>2</sup>, 561.

in one of his gossip letters to Atticus (i. 12. 3),<sup>1</sup> she was divorced from Pompey, on suspicion of an intrigue with Caesar, in 62 B.C. Pompey had heard rumors of her unfaithfulness during his absence in the wars with the pirates and with Mithridates, but he did not dare attack Caesar, as he needed his political support. (We might note the reflex action, here, of political life upon private expediency.) Pompey divorced her by letter, before his return to Rome, with the approval of everyone, says Cicero.<sup>2</sup> But her political importance did not end with this separation; for in 39 B.C., upon the demand of the people, she went to Sicily to bring about a reconciliation, if possible, between her son, Sextus Pompeius, and Octavianus.<sup>3</sup> And it should be added that in spite of her varied history, she reached an advanced age and was still living at the time of the battle of Actium and was treated with great consideration by Octavian.<sup>4</sup> It might also be interesting to note here an example of the complexity of inter-relationships which sprang up by the inter-marriage of the various important political families; for Mucia, upon her divorce from Pompey, married M. Aemilius Scaurus, the brother of Pompey's second wife, Aemilia, and stepson of Sulla.

Pompey's fifth wife was Cornelia, the daughter of Q. Metellus Piso Scipio, consul in 52 B.C. She was the young widow of P. Crassus, son of the triumvir, and from that fact alone, without any other basis, we might imagine many points of contact with our thesis. We cannot refrain from giving Plutarch's charming description of her: "The young lady had other attractions besides those of youth and beauty; for she was highly educated, played well upon the lute, understood geometry, and had been accustomed to listen with profit to lectures on philosophy; and all this, too, without in any degree becoming unamiable or pretentious, as sometimes young women do when they pursue such studies."<sup>5</sup> No doubt Plutarch considered a little learning a dangerous thing. She outlived her husband. Tyrrell and Purser, basing their comment upon Plutarch,<sup>6</sup> call attention to the contrast between the young and accomplished matron, living in holy wedlock with her

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius *Caesar* 50. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 42; Dio Cassius xxxvii. 49. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Appian v. 69, 291; Dio xlviii. 16. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Dio li. 2. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Plut. *Pomp.*

<sup>6</sup> III, lxiii; Plut. *Pomp.* 55.

sedate, elderly, but loving husband, and Clodia. Her life presents a quiet, domestic picture compared with the intrigues, meannesses, and crimes of public life of those days.

We have purposely left Pompey's fourth wife until last, as she serves as the connecting link between Pompey and his great rival, Julius Caesar. In 59 B.C., to strengthen the first Triumvirate, Pompey married Caesar's daughter Julia. In his section *De Amore Conjugali*, Valerius Maximus (iv. 6. 4) cites the instance of Pompey and Julia, and voices the belief that had she lived, the struggle between Caesar and Pompey might have been averted. She had all the qualities to hold and keep Pompey.<sup>1</sup> But fate prevented, and with her death the friendship between the two men came to an end.

Whether Caesar was the Don Juan which some of the historians seem to believe him to have been, or whether the marriages which he contracted and the intrigues upon which he entered were merely a part of his political policy it is impossible to determine.

Through his mother Caesar reached back to the great Marius; through his second wife, Pompeia, back to her grandfather, Sulla, through whom he also touched the house of Clodius, though "Caesar's wife should be above suspicion"; through his third wife, Calpurnia, he annexed himself for political ends to her father, L. Calpurnius Piso, in spite of the protest of Cato Uticensis, who complained that marriages and politics should have become so intermingled. And that same Cato found Caesar more intimately connected with his own household through the intimacy of Caesar with his sister Servilia, the mother of Brutus and mother of Tertia, the wife of Q. Cassius, and of Junia, the wife of Lepidus. How slight is the separation between love and hate! The man who killed Caesar was the son of the woman whom he loved.

May we digress merely to note that the sister of this Servilia, also called, of course, Servilia, was the second wife of that Lucullus whose first wife had been the famous Clodia's sister. The men very often had the worst of it in those days, as Lucullus surely had; for Servilia was scarcely an improvement upon Clodia, whom he had divorced.

<sup>1</sup> Drumann, III<sup>2</sup>, 684.

Nor did Caesar's name center only in names of those women who connected him with the past, or held him bound to the present, but he reached to the future; for the sister of his cousin Julius Caesar, Julia, was the mother of Marcus Antonius, and his niece Atia was the mother of Octavianus. It seems strange that the two figures that were to stand out so strongly in rivalry in the succeeding decade should trace back to Caesar indirectly in this way.

Of the women in touch with Caesar, as individuals Aurelia and Servilia seem to have been the strongest personalities, and the most interested in public affairs. Pompeia, Caesar's wife, young, rash, and heedless, had flung herself into the midst of that gay crowd to which Clodius belonged; and not even the watchful care of her mother-in-law could restrain her.<sup>1</sup> Caesar, wishing to use Clodius for his own ends, had overlooked the intrigue, but had divorced Pompeia, because, as we have quoted, "Caesar's wife should be above suspicion." Calpurnia had held herself coldly aloof from public affairs and had endured the infidelities of her husband, even when Cleopatra came to Rome.<sup>2</sup> She seems to have forgiven much because she loved much, as we may judge from her solicitude for Caesar on the fateful Ides of March.

It seems to have been only in the women of the older generation that one could expect to find the virtues which were found in Aurelia, revered, says Plutarch (cf. *Caes.* 9), not because of her race but because of her virtue. Her most important business we are told<sup>3</sup> was the bringing up of her children, a duty which the next generation willingly left to Greek slaves and tutors. Gaius seems to have been her best-beloved; and she followed his career at all times with interest and care.<sup>4</sup> She reminds us in that respect of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, though she had not that revolutionary spirit which spurred on the latter woman; nor does her influence over her son seem to have been quite as strong as that of Servilia, the mother of Marcus Brutus,<sup>5</sup> over her son. Considering that fact, it is hard to account for the part that Brutus played in the conspiracy against Caesar. Drumann<sup>6</sup> thinks that

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Caes.* 74; Plut. *Caes.* 9 and 10.    <sup>3</sup> Tac. *Dial.* 28; Dio Cassius xlv. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Caes.* 27.

<sup>4</sup> Suet. *Caes.* 74; Plut. *Caes.* 9 and 10.

<sup>5</sup> Cic. *Ad. Brut.* i. 18. 1; ii. 3. 3; 4. 5; i. 12. 1-2; 15. 13.    <sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, IV<sup>2</sup>, 19.

Servilia's influence over her son decreased after the death of her brother Cato, whom Brutus had taken as his model, and that she had no power to keep him and the others from the conspiracy, as he had not made her a sharer of the plan. Tyrrell and Purser<sup>1</sup> believe that Servilia's attitude toward the conspiracy was probably one of disapproval; for she must have retained much of her passion for Caesar. But as she appears never to have wearied in the interests of her son,<sup>2</sup> she certainly kept silence. In 44 B.C., when the conspirators finally met at Antium to plan their next move, she was present, with Tertia and Porcia, the wives of Cassius and Brutus;<sup>3</sup> and she took upon herself the removal from the *senatus consultum* of the clause regarding the grain commission, which would indicate her influence, at least, in important circles.

Porcia, Cato's daughter, was a fitting wife for the noble Brutus. With Cato as his pattern, we may well know that Brutus in his moral austerity and uprightness far surpassed the other members of his family; for Tertia, the wife of Cassius, and Junia, the wife of Lepidus, were of questionable reputation.<sup>4</sup> Porcia did not get along well with her mother-in-law; for she was evidently not manageable enough to endure her love of ruling, and there seems to have been a little jealousy between them as to which exerted the most influence over Brutus.<sup>5</sup> But she always agreed perfectly with her husband; for Brutus seemed to understand her spiritual and intellectual superiority. She won his confidence in the matter of the plot against Caesar, and she was the only woman who had cognizance of the affair beforehand. Plutarch says that she was not "inferior to the rest of her family for sober living and greatness of spirit, being addicted to philosophy, a great lover of her husband, and full of an understanding courage."<sup>6</sup> "In spirit the image of her father, with the mind of a man, a passionate republican, and of pure morals" was Porcia.<sup>7</sup> More noteworthy does purity of

<sup>1</sup> VI, cvii, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Att.* xv. 10. 1 and 3; 11. 2; 17. 2; *Brut.* i. 18. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Fam.* xvi. 23. 1 and 2.

<sup>4</sup> Tyrrell and Purser, III, xxvii; *Ad Att.* vi. 1. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Drumann, V, 198.

<sup>6</sup> Plut. *Cato* 73.

<sup>7</sup> Plut. *Brut.* 13 and 23; Val. Max. iii. 2. 15.

morals seem to these historians, in a woman of this period, apparently, than other facts which we might wish they had emphasized more decidedly. "So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

Junia, whom we have just mentioned, may serve as a connecting link between this period and that of Augustus; for though at first she belonged to the Republicans, after the battle of Mutina she joined her husband, Lepidus, and Octavianus and Antony against her brother Brutus and her brother-in-law Cassius. In *Ad Att.* xiv. 8.1, we see her the letter-bearer between Lepidus and Brutus. After the battle of Actium she came into disfavor with Octavianus by joining her son, M. Lepidus, against him.<sup>1</sup> He was executed, but she was released from bail out of Octavian's consideration for her husband.<sup>2</sup>

To the other member of the Second Triumvirate, Antony, Octavian was very closely bound; for he had for a short time as his wife Clodia, the daughter of Fulvia, Antony's wife; and Antony, upon the death of Fulvia, married Octavia, sister of Octavian. If one should wish to find two women to personify all the good, on one hand, and all the evil on the other, of the times, one could not find two better illustrations than the two women last mentioned—Octavia and Fulvia. And one marvels at their having been wives of the same man. Octavia, "the noblest woman of her time," Drumann calls her, "younger and more beautiful than Cleopatra, the Romans could not but wonder at the blind infatuation of Antony. But it is not this so much as her moral strength which has assured her the admiration of all time; a moral force which could not have developed to greater heights under the influence of the deepest religion. Nor is this apparent merely in comparison with women like Fulvia and Cleopatra, Julia and Livia. In her there was combined manly strength and womanly charm; a mixture of pure, human virtue and true Roman greatness. Such a spotless character does not allow others to excuse themselves by the degeneracy of the times. The highest significance of moral beauty in its perfection is that it proves incontestably to men that it is not a slave to outside influences, but that a god dwells within whom he can only follow."<sup>3</sup> Octavia served as a go-between for Antony's

<sup>1</sup> Velleius ii. 88. 1.    <sup>2</sup> Appian iv. 50. 216-19.    <sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, IV<sup>2</sup>, 257.



friends to Caesar's favor;<sup>1</sup> she won soldiers from Octavian for Antony's Parthian wars;<sup>2</sup> she endured Antony's unfaithfulness; but her honorable deportment served to damage Antony's cause, making him hated because of the wrong he did such a woman. It would almost seem as if upon her head had burst the storms of passion through which he must have passed in his violent experiences with Octavia's predecessor Fulvia, and her rival Cleopatra.

Cleopatra, of a foreign land, can hardly claim a place in a discussion of the women of the Roman Republic. But Fulvia cannot be omitted for she was the quintessence of almost all the passions that were swaying women of that day—greed, selfishness, thirst for power.<sup>3</sup> She was the daughter of a plebeian, which may account for her coarseness. She was married three times, to P. Clodius, C. Curio, and to Antony, as we have said before; "but the real beginning of her career was Caesar's death; *mulier auctionem provinciarum regnorumque faciebat; restituebantur exsules*,"<sup>4</sup> says Cicero, though it hardly needed a participation in public affairs for the widow of Clodius to be hated by Cicero. How he regarded her can be seen in the *Philippics*. Every act of hers was used by him to paint her as a monster, even the punishment of the assassins at Brundisium, October, 44 B.C., at which she was present.

During the war at Mutina she stayed in Rome, where she kept all her party busy, though often hard pressed. She had much to bring to her advantage and much to revenge when Antony joined himself to Octavian in 43. She was much closer to him when she espoused her daughter to him. In her position she could not turn aside the terror which broke over Rome at this union, but she could lighten it; she could become its protective spirit, and she became its destroying angel. Antonius placed no check upon her, and she carried out her bloody revenge as she pleased. Her enemies and the property which she destroyed were often unknown to the triumvirs.<sup>5</sup>

She reveled in murder and revenge and she numbered among her victims Cicero. Above all things she knew no pity. She alone among the relatives of the triumvirs would speak no word for the women upon whom the tax was levied in 43 B.C. Then Antonius and Octavianus were busy with the war at Philippi; the weak Lepidus made no move; and she carried on matters as she chose. Even Antony could celebrate a victory as consul only when she decreed.

<sup>1</sup> Plut. *Marcus Antonius*.

<sup>2</sup> Dio Cassius xlix. 33 and 34.

<sup>3</sup> Drumann, II<sup>2</sup>, 310.

<sup>4</sup> Cic. *Phil.* v. 11.

<sup>5</sup> App. iv. 29; Dio xlvii. 8. 2.

From ambition and from her desire to get her husband, whose rights ostensibly she wanted to defend, away from Cleopatra, she with Manius renewed the Civil War. Lucius was sent into the field, where he had nothing to do; and his fellow legates only supported him for appearance's sake.

After the surrender of Perusia, Fulvia fled beyond Puteoli to Brundisium and Octavian did not prevent her sailing with L. Plautus, since his regard for her husband and for Sextus Pompeius, in Sicily, persuaded his sparing them. . . . Fulvia and Antonius finally met in Athens; but because of her failure he was embittered against her; and the blighting of all her fond hopes and the useless waste of their treasure broke her. She became ill on the return trip and died in Sicyon without Antony's seeing her again. The news of her death hastened the peace between him and Octavian at Brundisium.

"Fulvia," says Velleius, "had nothing womanly about her except her body;<sup>1</sup> and circumstances allowed her to revenge that blunder of nature. Warrior-woman,<sup>2</sup> marriage to her was merely a means whereby she might rule through men and over them. Her ambition needed an outward support; she could only murder the defenseless and plunder the down-trodden; when she stepped out independently, her rôle ended."

An extreme case, to be sure, and not one from which to draw conclusions. But from all the cases at hand surely conclusions may be drawn; conclusions which would merely repeat our thesis that the public activity of the women of the late Republic was largely dependent upon the political position of the men of their families; and in that position individually they exerted a great deal of influence. The question still remains to be answered whether collectively or by concerted action women endeavored to gain either political power or to win for themselves any particular privileges.

A good study of this general emancipation of women is a dissertation by J. Teufer, Berlin, 1913: *Zur Geschichte der Frauemanzipation im alten Rom, eine Studie zu Livius xxxiv 1-8*. The thesis has to do with that description by Livy of the concerted efforts on the part of the women of Rome, in 195 B.C., to obtain a repeal of the Oppian Law, which had been passed after the battle of Cannae when the state needed all her resources against Hannibal, and to conserve these resources for the use of the state had placed

<sup>1</sup> ii. 74. 3.    <sup>2</sup> Dio xlviii. 10. 3; Plut. *Ant.* 10; Val. Max. iii. 5. 3.

restrictions upon the expenditure of money on the part of the women especially, for unnecessary display and on fine turnouts. The passage in Livy, containing the speech of the Elder Cato against the abrogation of the law and the speech in defense by L. Valerius, though neither may be absolutely authentic, gives a good personification, in Cato, of the period of conflict between the old and the new ideas at Rome; but more than that it gives a good picture of the position of women, in private and public life of the period. For the women effected the abrogation of the law through force as well as through persuasion; for besides bringing all their influence to bear upon their husbands and the men of their families, they besieged the doors of the tribunate and would not depart until the tribunes had given their promises to repeal the law. In the speech of Valerius we may see perhaps one of the very earliest speeches in favor of woman's rights: *Vos in manu et tutela, non in servitio debetis habere eos et malle patres vos aut viros quam dominos dici . . . quo plus potestis, eo moderatius imperio uti debetis.*<sup>1</sup>

The belief in the inferiority of woman to man had always been due to the psychological consideration of their mental inferiority to man. Hence that lack of freedom which Valerius in his speech characterizes as life-long slavery, woman having been always, as we saw in the beginning, under the control of father, husband, or tutor. "The development of the state and the assumption of those protectorial rights formerly exercised by the head of the family was advantageous to woman; and she obtained more and more the same position before the law as man. As in the development of culture at Rome, so here, the turning-point was the Second Punic War."<sup>2</sup>

The effect on the position of woman socially of the gradual change in the marriage customs, we have seen, is illustrated in the cases of the individual women whom we have discussed.

Inter-dependent with this social change, this development from the patriarchal stage of society to one in which the individual counted<sup>3</sup> was the increase in freedom in civil rights. It can hardly be conceived that this extension in rights came about without some effort on the part of the women them-

<sup>1</sup> Livy xxxiv. 7. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Teufer, Dissertation, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34 ff.

selves. Whether there was a general movement directed toward such an end is a question which is closely connected with the general question as to the political activity of women in Rome. At least there was no such effort for political recognition as marks the endeavors of the suffragist today; for *seditio et secessio muliebris* (Livy xxxiv. 5. 5) as can be seen from the context, had a horrible sound to the Roman. Actually, the desire for political rights was far from the minds of the Roman women; for back of the idea *cum feminis nulla comitorum communio est*<sup>1</sup> lay the state principle that participation in politics was dependent upon the ability to bear arms.

This was logically understood in Valerius' reply to Cato<sup>2</sup> that he should put women into uniforms and then they might have a share also in the general assembly; or in Hortensia's claim<sup>3</sup> that having no representation they ought not be taxed. This uprising of women was not a revolt against the law, but merely a claim for the womanly privileges of dress, pleasure, and equipage. Its only political significance lay in the fact that in meeting their demands a law had to be revoked. Zonaras' and Dio Cassius' accounts are tinged by the fact that in their time, the second century A.D., the women did have some political ambitions.

The whole significance of this uprising lay in the two facts that it showed, first of all, the two parties rising in the state, personified in Cato and Valerius; and, in the second place, it illustrates the force of women to influence and gain a majority vote. If the Roman government never gave to women the political rights which it gave to men, the rôle that they played in Roman history—that rôle in which we have seen so many women—is all the more significant.<sup>4</sup>

That the women had helped the state collectively before this time is evident from Dio H. 8. 39; Plut. *Coriolanus* 33; Livy ii. 40; xxxiv. 5. 9, when they had apparently passed a decree among themselves to help save the state; and when they had sacrificed their gold ornaments to assist the state (cf. Livy, v. 25; 50; xxxiv. 5. 9; Plut. *Camill.* 8; Val. Max. 5. 6. 8).

Historians have left undecided how far the authority of the state can have influenced the conduct of women in these matters (cf. Liv. ii. 40; Dio H. 8. 62; Plut. *Coriolanus* 39). But so far were the Romans from casting doubts upon their independent co-operation, that they regarded certain honors and privileges which women enjoyed as a thank-offering of the country for women's willingness to make sacrifices for the state (cf. Plut. *Rom.* 20; Val. Max. 5. 2. 1; Liv. ii. 40, 11 f.). Moreover, occasional assemblages

<sup>1</sup> Gellius 5. 19; Val. Max. 3. 8. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Appian iv. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Zon. 9. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Teufer, Dissertation, chap. v.

of women were called (cf. Liv. v. 25. 8) in the time of Camillus—*matronae, coetibus ad eam rem consultandam habitis, communi decreto pollicitae tribunis militum aurum et omnia ornamenta sua in aerarium detulerunt.*

Such assemblies in the time of the old Republic were surely held therefore; but there is no reason to believe that up to the end of the third century B.C. such meetings were anything except unusual. But the decline of patriarchal control, which we have described, and the increased freedom of women might easily have had as one phase the formation of societies of women, as we might conclude if in Livy xxxiv. 7. 1 we place *omnes alii ordines* in contrast to *conjuges*; or, if Val. Max. 5. 2. 1 and 8. 3. 3, in the first century A.D., in the *ordo matronarum* mean a sodality of women. Such *matronarum conventus* did exist in the first century A.D. (cf. Seneca, ed. Haase, III, 428, frag. xiii. 49; Suet. *Galba* 5), and we should only be justified in thinking that the development had been a natural one, and the presence of some such organizations might be taken for granted in the late Republic.

We know that after the appeal of the Oppian Law discussed above

a dozen or more attempts were made to limit by statute the expenditure on dress at dinners and at funerals, but they were all ineffective. We may suspect that the silent or organized opposition of the women brought many of these measures to naught, but history throws no light on the point.

They did protest, however, a century or more later, as Valerius Maximus tells us, when no man dared take up their cause. The members of the Second Triumvirate were hard pressed for money in the year 43 B.C., equipping an army for the impending struggle with Brutus and Cassius, and published an edict requiring fourteen hundred of the richest women to make a valuation of their property, and to contribute such portion of it as should be required. The women affected by this proclamation at first appealed to the sister of Octavianus and the mother and the wife of Antony to enlist their support against the execution of this arbitrary measure; but meeting with only partial success, as Appian tells us, they came down to the Forum, forced their way to the tribunal of the triumvirs, whose acts no man dared question, and protested vigorously through their spokesman Hortensia, the daughter of the great orator Hortensius: "Let war with the Gauls or the Parthians come," she said, "and we shall not be inferior to our mothers in zeal for the common safety; but for civil wars may we never contribute, nor even assist you against one

another." It was Hortensia who enunciated on this occasion, for the first time in history, the principle of "no taxation without representation." "Why should we pay taxes," she cried, "when we have no part in the honors, the commands, the statecraft, for which you contend against one another with such harmful results?"

Appian informs us that "when Hortensia had thus spoken the triumvirs were angry that women should dare to hold a public meeting when men were silent . . . and they ordered the lictors to drive them away from the tribunal, which they proceeded to do until cries were raised by the multitude outside, and the triumvirs said they would postpone till the next day the consideration of the matter."<sup>1</sup>

It might appear that the police of those days had as little regard for women as some English police of the present day.

Whether Roman women entered the business world, in the trades and professions, or to what extent they did, is hard to determine; for the material is scanty, being chiefly inscriptional evidence in the way of epitaphs.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to the custom today, the professions of medicine and law required little preliminary training at Rome.

The medical profession was not one into which women of the better class entered. The art was introduced into Italy from Greece and almost all the men who followed it were Greek freedmen. An examination of the names on tombstones shows us that the women also who practiced medicine were of the same nationality and of the same low social standing.

So far as the legal profession is concerned, no technical training was required, as we have said; but the law did not recognize the right of women to appear as advocates. It is a little surprising, after having secured the recognition of their independence before the law, and after having gained admission to almost all the vocations, that they failed to carry this masculine stronghold. Apparently they made some progress toward winning the privilege, since we find a provision in the Praetorian Edict of Ulpian forbidding them to appear as advocates. Such a prohibition would scarcely have been made if women had not attempted to practice law. However, in certain circumstances, women might appear in court in their own defense. That gossipy writer Valerius Maximus mentions two such instances of women who argued their own cases. His opinion of the propriety of their action may be easily inferred from his remark in introducing the cases: "One must mention even those women upon whom nature and modesty which befits the *stola* was not strong enough to impose silence in the forum and the courts." One of the two, he

<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *Society and Politics in Ancient Rome*, pp. 48-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77 ff.

tells us, because she pleaded her own cause as a man would have done, was dubbed the "Man-woman," *androgynē*. Of the other who argued her case before the praetor, "not because there was a lack of advocates, but because she was filled with presumption," he says, "she lived to the second consulship of Gaius Caesar, and the first of Publius Servilius, for one ought to record the time when such an abnormal being died rather than when she was born."<sup>1</sup>

Theology was open only to such as ecclesiastical law or custom allowed, barring most women, therefore, except the *flaminica* and the Vestal virgins, though the new religions which were admitted later into Rome had priesthoods to which women were admitted.

In literature there are only two names which have come down to us, that of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, from whose pen we have extracts from two letters to her son Gaius, or two extracts from the same letter; and they serve to show us the political activity of the woman. The other is that of Sulpicia, who belonged to the literary circle of Messalla, of which Tibullus was the most distinguished member. So she really does not belong to the early period of which we are speaking.

That women took a part in the drama of the day we know from Cicero's letters; for he mentions (*Ad Att.* xv. 27. 3) engaging an actress for the games which Brutus was about to give, in July, 44 B.C.; and he mentions the pleasing acting of an Arbuscula, whom Horace (*Sat.* i. 10. 77) also mentions. And of course Cytheirs, the one-time *amica* of Antony, is well known. But their profession can never have been an honorable one.

Of course, women engaged in the trades and in handiwork; but such women were either of Greek extraction or belonged to the lower classes. In fact, the Roman lady may seem indeed, from our survey, in some measure to have justified the statement of Cato the Censor, "All men rule over women, we Romans rule over all men, and our wives rule over us."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

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